

Spring 2003

## A MID-TERM REVIEW

### INFRASTRUCTURE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT TOP PRIORITIES FOR CD3

As we move forward into the second half of this four-year term of office, I thought it might be helpful to take a look at the things that we—the community and my office—have been able to accomplish together in Council District Three over the past 28 months. As you'll see, there are some large-scale projects which we've worked hard on and have received support from the Mayor, Council and other government entities, and many smaller, community-based projects that we've been able to make happen on our own, through hard work, innovation and sometimes, sheer determination.

I hope you all feel the same sense of pride that I do at what we've been able to do together to benefit our older, urban neighborhoods. This is truly a partnership, and it works because the residents of District Three continue to set the priorities for this office. It is by working together that we've been able to make so many of these projects a reality.

### MORE FUNDS TO FIX STREETS AND SIDEWALKS, PLANT TREES, INSTALL LIGHTS

Finding funds for neighborhood beautification projects throughout the district has been one of my top priorities, and it's one that many residents share. I will continue to

identify creative ways to fund projects to fill potholes, resurface streets, replace deteriorated sidewalks, install streetlights, plant trees, and construct community-enhancing medians and streetscape projects, all of which make our neighborhoods a better place to live. This remains a commitment and passion of mine, and I believe we've been very successful on this front.



It's not where you start, it's where you finish! I joined community members at the groundbreaking for the El Cajon Boulevard median landscape project last summer (left), and in less than nine months, a new series of landscaped medians (right) now help beautify this portion of the Boulevard just east of I-15.

### A \$3.67 MILLION SOLUTION

This past June, I brought forth a \$3,677,000 District Three infrastructure loan as part of our Fiscal Year 2003 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) package. This action will allow us to complete large-scale capital improvement projects and smaller neighborhood

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revitalization projects much sooner. One benefit of financing these projects in this manner is that it saves us money **now**, since costs of projects will only continue to increase over time. We **save** money to do these projects sooner.

This allows us to infuse substantial amounts of money into our District Three infrastructure projects. Our 75/25 Sidewalk Improvement Program will receive \$850,000; the Mid-block Streetlight Project gets \$250,000 for lights district-wide, and an additional \$150,000 for much-needed streetlights in City Heights; and \$100,000 will go to convert streetlights from yellow to white, high pressure sodium lights on existing poles throughout the district.

However, these loan funds aren't the only funds we've committed to these specific District Three programs over the past two years. We've committed over \$1 million dollars to sidewalk repair with a combination of CDBG, Transnet, and budget infrastructure funds (which were allocated as part of the Fiscal Year 2003 budget). These will continue to go toward replacing sidewalks in front of residential properties, and are **in addition to the more than \$500,000 that the City has already expended over the past two years to install sidewalks, curbs and gutters at 186 different sites throughout the district.**



26th Street in Golden Hill is among the major thoroughfares repaved in District Three over the past two years.

## **RESURFACING STREETS, INSTALLING LIGHTS TO IMPROVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**

Along these same lines, I've continued to push City staff to resurface more streets in our communities. **Over the past two years, we've slurry sealed or repaved 196 streets in District Three.** And I'm pleased to report that some of these streets were major thoroughfares that needed resurfacing the most, such as long stretches of Adams Avenue in Normal Heights, 26<sup>th</sup> Street in Golden Hill, and University Avenue in North Park. Increased street resurfacing and slurry seal projects may become the hardest to fund in the next several years due to State budget reductions.

Funding for street lights has been augmented as well, with the total funding package for lighting over the past two years at nearly \$600,000. Earmarked for streetlight conversion is \$170,000 in both CDBG and Transnet funding, while \$426,500 in CDBG funds has been specified for mid-block streetlights over the past two funding cycles.

## **THE CITY'S FIRST-EVER POTHOLE PROGRAM A HUGE SUCCESS**

Innovation always pays a big part in finding new ways to do old things. This past year, I partnered with the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council to introduce the City's first-ever pothole program. Using apprentice workers, we were able to fill 340 potholes in less than three months. The project was so successful it is being copied in other districts, and we intend to resume the project in District Three this spring.



The District Three Pothole Program, the first of its kind in the City, surpassed its goal to fill 300 potholes in less than three months.

## **UNDERGROUNDING PROGRAM BACK ON TRACK**

Undergrounding utility lines continues to be a major priority for me and many of you in our older, urban communities. This past December, the California Public Utilities Commission finally approved a plan for which I had fought for over a year. The new plan will dramatically speed up and increase the number of lines to be undergrounded annually. The plan will raise approximately

Under the City's new undergrounding policy, 35 miles of utility lines will be placed underground annually.





\$36.5 million a year, in addition to the \$10 million currently collected under the state-mandated program. **This will increase the annual output from 10 miles to 35 miles of lines to be undergrounded each year.** This plan will help make our communities safer from heavy wind storms which may bring lines down, like we experienced in late 2002. It will also remove a major source of visual blight that continues to haunt our older urban neighborhoods and will increase property values.

## **LANDSCAPED MEDIAN PROJECTS HELP BEAUTIFY COMMUNITIES**

I am also a firm believer that landscaping and improvements along the medians of our streets not only benefit the communities in which they are located, but act as gateways from one neighborhood into another. **Over the past two years I have made a concerted effort to funnel a significant amount of funds to median and streetscape projects throughout the district.** In fact, \$2,928,200 has been set aside for these projects—\$271,200 in FY02 and FY03, \$250,000 in FY02 budget infrastructure funds, \$100,000 in Transnet funding, and \$2,307,000 as part of the infrastructure loan.

The landscaped medians along El Cajon Boulevard in North Park and City Heights are great examples of how streetscapes can not only transform a business district, but add life to the surrounding area. That is why I have opted to fund a group of large-scale streetscape projects in the district that I am confident will further enhance these already revitalized communities. I have allocated



Funding is in place to complete the stretch of beautifully landscaped medians along El Cajon Boulevard between Texas Street and 30<sup>th</sup> Street in North Park.

\$950,000 to complete the El Cajon Boulevard medians from Texas Street to 30<sup>th</sup> Street, \$735,000 to assist the Adams Avenue Business Association with their ongoing infrastructure improvement projects, \$450,000 for the North Park Main Street Streetscape Project, \$220,000 for the ongoing Hillcrest Streetscape Project, and \$187,000 for the Euclid Avenue Revitalization Action Plan.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION, HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Smaller neighborhood-oriented revitalization projects are also a priority. Historic Shirley Ann Place in University Heights will receive \$20,000 under the infrastructure loan program for their sidewalk replacement, which complements the \$17,500 they received last year to install historic street lights. The Azalea Park Neighborhood Association in City Heights has been allotted \$40,000 for their Neighborhood Identification Project; and the arts and business community along Ray Street in North Park, which produces the very successful art gathering “Ray At Night” on the second Saturday of each month, will receive \$100,000 for a street identification/revitalization project.

Additionally, the University Heights Community Development Corporation received \$10,000 for enhancements to Park Boulevard, the North Park neighborhood of Altadena received \$101,200 to make their dream of constructing a historic median on Thorn Street a reality, the South Park Action Council received \$55,000 to continue their revitalization efforts that have produced historic bike racks, benches and trash receptacles; and \$135,000 in FY02 budget infrastructure funds will help construct the North Park Pershing Portal Project, which will serve as a gateway between this community and Balboa Park.

## **PLANTING TREES A PRIORITY**

We’ve also been able to pull together \$60,000 for tree plantings in CD3 over the past two CDBG funding cycles. People For Trees continues to do outstanding work in our neighborhoods, and the street tree program does a great job of improving the quality of life in our residential neighborhoods in the same way the median and streetscape projects revitalize our business corridors. These tree plantings further supplement the Community Forest Initiative, which seeks to plant 5,000 trees a year for the next 20 years, producing 100,000 new trees citywide. I think we can all agree that planting trees in our urban communities must remain a priority.

Street trees provide much-needed shade for our urban communities, while adding to the overall beauty of our residential neighborhoods.



## **MAKING OUR STREETS PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY**

Other important infrastructure improvements for District Three came about during the FY03 budget. We located funds to pay for the landscape maintenance along the I-15 corridor; constructed and installed seven new street lights in City Heights; finalized traffic signal upgrades at First Avenue and Washington Street; and installed a new traffic signal at University Avenue and Van Dyke Avenue. In addition, John Jay Adams Elementary and Euclid Avenue Elementary, both in our district, were awarded Safe Routes to Schools grants to provide sidewalk and safety improvements totaling \$970,000. Finally, under the sidewalks for school locations budget, District Three had two locations on the list, Maple Street from Highland Avenue to Roseland Place and Highland from Maple to Olive streets. This allocation will provide sidewalks—where none existed in the past—to improve access to school routes for children.

### **ENGINEERING STUDY TO OUTLINE SIDEWALK, CURB, GUTTER REPAIRS**

I was also successful in securing \$226,000 for a pilot project within District Three to study the engineering deficiencies of our sidewalks, curbs and gutters. The pilot project will include the communities of Normal Heights, North Park and South Park, and will survey and analyze the deficiencies there, and create a prioritized list of areas and projects to be improved. This is a new approach toward addressing our older infrastructure and deferred maintenance. It is my hope that this study will give us a clear picture of what our infrastructure needs are so that we can start to plan for funding to make the necessary improvements.

With over \$1 million set aside for our District Three 75/25 Sidewalk Improvement Program, sidewalks throughout the district can go from being cracked, buckled and unsightly (as shown below) ...



... to being smooth, safe and attractive (as shown above). For more information on this program, simply call my office at 619/236-6633.

## **\$12.5 MILLION RECEIVED FOR PARKS**

In addition to these infrastructure improvements, I was able to secure increased funding for maintenance and acquisition of precious park space throughout District Three. These funds help add precious green and open space to our urban communities.

In all, over the past two years, District Three has received an impressive \$12,504,448 in funds for parks.

-- We opened two new parks in City Heights at Park de la Cruz/38<sup>th</sup> Street Canyon Park and Teralta Park, and a third park promised as part of the I-15 mitigation, 39<sup>th</sup> Street Park in Normal Heights, opened on March 29<sup>th</sup> of this year.

Teralta Park is one of three new parks that have opened in District Three over the past two years. So far, we've been able to secure \$12.5 million for parks throughout the district.



-- A \$545,960 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant helped develop Park de la Cruz/38<sup>th</sup> Street Canyon Park.

-- \$1,356,000 in State Highway Operating Protection Program Funds and City Park and Rec Matching Funds was earmarked for both Teralta Neighborhood Park and Park de la Cruz/38<sup>th</sup> Street Canyon Park. These funds will help construct restrooms and other needed amenities at these two sites.

-- \$1.5 million in Prop 12 funds will help provide additional park space and amenities at 39<sup>th</sup> Street Park.

-- Construction on Terrace Drive Park in Kensington is fully underway and should be completed shortly; and the long-awaited redesign of North Park Community Park is underway and should be completed in late summer.

-- Funding also came our way in the form of Park and Recreation Department matching funds for smaller yet significant community parks and programs. Funding allocations have come through for the following: \$30,000 for fencing of Trolley Barn Park; \$5,000 for the Greater Golden Hill CDC; \$11,000 for the Fern Street Circus; and \$5,000 for leash-free parks.

-- ADA improvements worth \$820,000 were made to playgrounds at Golden Hill Recreation Center, Trolley Barn Park in University Heights and Azalea Park Community Park in City Heights. The funds came from three sources: \$620,000 in Proposition 12 bond funds, \$30,000 in Park and Recreation matching funds, and \$170,000 in Mid-City special park fee funds.



## **\$8.2 MILLION FOR BALBOA PARK**

Over the past two years, we've been especially successful at working to obtain funds for Balboa Park, the crown jewel in our City's park system/ Over \$8.2 million in funds have been amassed for a variety of projects and institutions throughout the park.



A \$975,000 State grant will help study traffic, parking and circulation in the center of Balboa Park.

In January of last year, I was proud to accept a \$975,000 grant obtained from the State through the efforts of Assemblymember Christine Kehoe and Governor Gray Davis. This money will be used to conduct a comprehensive traffic, parking, and circulation study for the park's core, along with a thorough update to the Balboa Park Central Mesa Precise Plan and the Inspiration Point Precise Plan. The purpose of this study is to examine closely the parking needs of the Central Mesa and determine the best location for a parking structure that will meet future needs of the park. It will also allow the public to potentially reclaim park land that is currently used for parking in the Palisades (in front of the Aerospace Museum) and Plaza de Panama (in front of the Museum of Art) areas. In 1935, these two areas were delightful public spaces with fountains, gardens and plazas that were built for the Exposition. Removing the parking lots that currently occupy these spaces will allow for the re-creation of these historic areas.

This past September, after working hard with City staff and lobbying State officials, I was honored to join with Governor Davis when he announced that Balboa Park would receive \$6 million in state funds to restore several park facilities and allow for the construction of a Veterans Memorial Garden in the park. I was especially pleased because the restoration of Balboa Park—which is located

entirely within District Three—has been a top priority of mine since taking office. **The \$6 million will help fund four other projects in addition to the Veterans Memorial Garden: 1) major repairs to the ornamentation on the historic Museum of Art building; 2) major repairs to the ornamentation on the historic Casa del Prado building; 3) exterior painting and stucco repair for the historic California Tower; and 4) reconstruction of the West Arcade.**

In other areas of Balboa Park, the Organ Pavilion received \$1 million for its electrical upgrade and another \$100,000 for repairs to the world-famous organ; the Centro Cultural de la Raza received \$60,000; the Timken Museum of Art was given \$30,000; and the World Beat Center was awarded \$18,000, all for infrastructure improvements. Additionally, \$15,000 was allotted for construction drawings for the proposed park at Bird Park in North Park at the edge of the East Mesa of the park; \$12,500 was earmarked for the re-vegetation of Florida Canyon; and \$4,988 in Park and Rec matching funds was given to the San Diego Model Railroad Museum.



The historic Casa del Prado building received funds for major repairs to its ornamentation.

When I first took office, I set as one of my primary goals for Balboa Park the reorganization of the park's governance structure. This was accomplished in January 2002. A newly restructured Balboa Park Committee now oversees the business of the park, much like our community planning committees. This committee is representative of the park's stakeholders, and includes designated representatives from the surrounding communities of Golden Hill, North Park and Uptown, as well as from the cultural institutions and user groups. It also includes at-large members to represent the regional interests of the park.

## CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING TAKING THE LEAD ON HOUSING DAY

I continue to try to be both an advocate and a leader on the City Council when it comes to the critical issue of affordable housing in our City. Fortunately, we've seen some major gains in the past year with regard to this issue.



Over 1,000 people showed up for "Housing Day" before the City Council on August 6, 2002.

Last August, the Council joined with me to declare the nation's first-ever Housing State of Emergency. On that same day, which has come to be known as "Housing Day" in San Diego, the Council also approved an inclusionary housing policy that will require developers of new housing projects in the City to either include a percentage of the units as affordable, or pay a waiver fee to the City that will go into a fund to create affordable housing units.

Additionally, the Council approved an Affordable/Urban In-Fill Housing Expedite Program that will help move affordable housing projects through the bureaucratic pipeline quicker.

### **\$55 MILLION FOR AFFORDABLE UNITS**

The Council also supported my proposal to create funds to help build affordable housing units by pooling the combined bonding capacity of all of the City's redevelopment areas.

I'm proud to say that on January 28<sup>th</sup> of this year, the City Council unanimously approved the release of \$55 million in funds which this bonding plan produced. The cooperative effort which helped produce these funds is a first for San Diego.

**By leveraging these funds with other funding sources, the plan is expected to produce nearly 2,200 affordable housing units over the next two to three years.** This compares with 1,800 units produced by these same redevelopment agencies over the past 10 years.

We're seeing more affordable housing projects start up in our district, and recently, we cut the ribbon on the Hollywood Palms Apartments in City Heights. This complex offers 94 two- to four-bedroom rental units, all of

which are considered affordable low- to moderate-income family residences. Additionally, we'll soon break ground on the North Park Renaissance Project at 30<sup>th</sup> Street and El Cajon Boulevard, which will include 92 units of affordable senior housing, along with two dozen affordable, multi-family townhomes for sale.

Urban Village Townhomes (currently under construction, below) ...



... and Hollywood Palms (above) are two City Heights housing projects that have added much-needed affordable, for-sale and rental units to District Three.

As rents and housing costs continue to rise, it's important that we focus on providing truly affordable housing for the residents already living in our communities.

### **PRESERVING SRO HOTELS**

I support the plan for a new Federal Courthouse Building downtown, which we need. However, I continue to push to compel the federal government to replace the 398 single room occupancy (SRO) units we are losing downtown as a result of the construction of the new courthouse. As we witnessed recently with the closure of the Maryland Hotel, the people who rely on SROs for housing—many of whom are seniors—are on the verge of homelessness. Without access to housing units in the price range offered by SROs, these people wind up out on the streets. Although my efforts to pass an emergency resolution to protect the residents of the Maryland Hotel fell one vote short at council, I will not be deterred in my quest to keep this issue in front of the City Council.



I will fight to maintain an adequate supply of SRO units downtown, and will continue to push the federal government to replace the SRO units lost to construction of the planned Federal Court House, such as those at the Capri Hotel (shown in background at left).

Toward that end, I pushed to have the Land Use & Housing Committee continue the Centre City Development Corporation's funding for senior housing. Fortunately, the Committee agreed with my proposal (and even increased the amount!), and they have recommended that \$311,000 be earmarked by CCDC to help fund a broad-based collaborative which will continue to lease SRO units downtown for our senior citizens.



## LIBRARY PLAN HELPS DISTRICT THREE BRANCHES

Expanding our branch library system in District Three continues to be a priority for me. As one of the oldest regions in the City, the Mid-City branch libraries are essentially undersized and outdated in terms of today's standards. I'm pleased that this past November, the City Council approved the Library Facilities Enhancement Plan, which will fund improvements to 23 branch libraries throughout the City, as well as the Central Library.



A \$250,000 feasibility study will help determine if the historic Teacher Training Annex in University Heights can be converted into a branch library or other public use.

In District Three the plan includes:

- A new 25,000 square-foot branch library in North Park, which will serve as the flagship library for the district;
- A new 15,000 square-foot branch library in the Mission Hills/Hillcrest area;
- A 2,318 square-foot expansion of the Kensington/Normal Heights Branch Library; and
- \$250,000 to conduct a feasibility study of the historic Teacher Training Annex in University Heights to determine if it can be converted to library space or other public use.

The Kensington-Normal Heights Branch Library will be expanded by 2,318 feet.



When the planned improvements are implemented, library space in District Three will increase from its current 32,767 square feet to 55,917 square feet.

Last year, I also succeeded in my fight to extend the hours of operation for the Kensington and North Park branch libraries.

## CREATING PARTNERSHIPS TO REVITALIZE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Redevelopment of our urban communities has proven to be a vital step in our quest to revitalize all of our neighborhoods in Council District Three. I'm pleased to report that over the past two years, we've seen a continuation of the redevelopment that has improved so many of our communities throughout the 1990s.

One of my top priorities for the district is the completion of the **City Heights Metro Center** at University Avenue and I-15. This new four-story, 81,500 sq. ft. facility has been specifically designed for the San Diego Workforce Partnership's Career Center program. The Metro Career Center will provide a variety of job training, referral and education services, and will offer a Head Start day care program on the premises. The **Metro Villas**, the affordable housing complex being built adjacent to the Career Center, will offer one- to four-bedroom units for rent, and will include two playgrounds and 485 parking spaces in a four-story structure on the site to be shared with the Career Center. The Career Center is scheduled to open in March 2004. The estimated completion date of Metro Villas is September 2004.

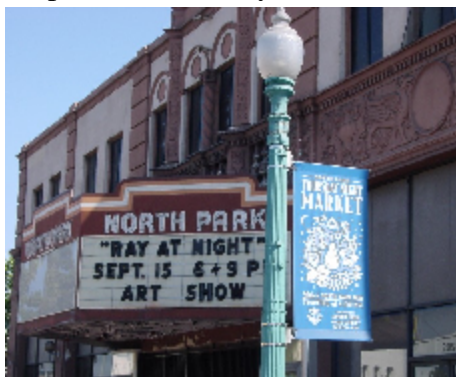


The City Heights Metro Career Center and Metro Villas will bring job-training programs and affordable housing to Mid-City.

During the past two years we also witnessed the beginning of a bold new way to site schools in our older, urban neighborhoods. The approval of the **Model School Project** will spur the creation of a new elementary school, a community center, affordable housing units, and park space in City Heights at the south end of 43<sup>rd</sup> Street at Spruce Street. The plan is to design a school that takes up less space, creates an "urban village" to serve the community's needs and provide replacement for housing that otherwise would not have been replaced.

**In April of last year, the City Council unanimously approved the development of the historic North Park Theatre.** The theater is one of my top priorities, and it is viewed by many in the community as the cornerstone in the redevelopment of the University Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street region. In December, the City Council unanimously approved two key elements of this development: the funding of the 400-car parking structure that will be

located across the street from the theater at 29<sup>th</sup> Street and North Park Way, and the allocation of \$655,000 for the seismic retrofit of the theater. Additionally, in February, San Diego Lyric Opera—the primary tenant in the theater—kicked off their \$3.2 million fund-raising campaign to restore the interior of the theater. To date, they have already received commitments for \$1.6 million of their goal. The parking garage is scheduled to open in September 2004, with the theater ready to present shows to the public in February 2005.



The re-opening of the North Park Theatre, one of my top priorities for the district, is scheduled to take place in February 2005.

Plans continue to move forward with the multi-faceted, mixed-use **Renaissance at North Park** development at 30th Street and El Cajon Boulevard at the former site of Aztec Bowl. The developers for the project, Carter/Reese Associates, envision a mix of market-rate court homes on 30th Street, affordable townhomes fronting Kansas Street, a multi-story senior housing complex at 30th and El Cajon, retail space, and a community center. Ground will be broken on this project sometime this summer.

And finally, the long-awaited **Regional Transportation Center (RTC)** project broke ground in July. When construction finishes midway through this year, the RTC will offer a showroom for alternative fuel vehicles, an environmental education center, and a fueling station for electric, natural gas and other alternative fuel vehicles.

## **FIGHTING FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES**

For the past two years, I was honored to serve as chair of the City's Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee. During this time, we brought forth a variety of projects that serve not only District Three residents, but the city as a whole.

As chair of the committee we were able to:

Work with the unions representing the Emergency Medical Service employees to improve service and staffing levels and increase efficiency;

Produce a new citywide policy to deal with streetlight conversion from yellow to white High Pressure Sodium lights. Also, we introduced new "full cut-off" lighting standards that not only permit us to see our streets, but also to see the stars;

Create a new Streets Design Manual that better reflects the needs of our older, urban communities for pedestrian-oriented street design;

Create new Equal Opportunity Contracting programs and enhance existing programs to give more emerging firms the opportunity to participate in public contracts;

Obtain funding for a mini street sweeper to maintain bike lanes citywide;

Help create the "Lead Safe Neighborhoods" program to reduce the incidence of lead poisoning in children;

Pull 10 more uniformed police officers out from behind desks and back into patrolling the streets through the Police Department's "Civilianization" of Police Personnel program;

Approve the Azalea Park/Hollywood Park Revitalization Action Plan; and

Support the initiation of environmental cleanups through the Brown Field Restoration Program.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

Over the past two years, we've been able to accomplish much together. Many projects are currently under way or are in the pipeline and will begin in the near future. I will continue to monitor these projects and see them through to completion.

As in the past, I will set my priorities for the coming two years based on your guidance and input. Even though we face tough challenges ahead due to limited, and in some cases, diminished resources, I am confident that together we can continue to improve our neighborhoods.

Thank you for all your help!

Sincerely,

